



**Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation**

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**Contact:** Erica Ringewald | (518) 402-8000  
Press Office | [PressOffice@dec.ny.gov](mailto:PressOffice@dec.ny.gov)

**NEW YORK STATE ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL STEPS TAKEN TO PROTECT  
IMPACTED RESIDENTS IN RESPONSE TO LACKAWANNA FIRE**

***State Secures Commitment from Great Lakes Industrial Development to Quickly Respond  
to Homeowner Requests for Smoke Damage Cleanups***

***State Will Conduct Additional Sampling in the Neighborhood to Provide Public with  
Further Information on the Nature of the Smoke Plume***

***State Will Partner with Erie County to Host an Additional Public Availability Session***

The State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Health (DOH) announced today that New York State has secured a commitment from Great Lakes Industrial Development to begin quickly responding to impacted residents to have their homes cleaned up, following the November 9 fire at the former Bethlehem Steel Plant in Lackawanna. The owner of the former steel plant has provided a hotline for residents to call, will provide a letter to each impacted resident, and will provide contact information on its website to facilitate a speedy recovery.

The State will also conduct additional sampling and laboratory analysis to better understand the nature of the smoke plume and to provide further information to residents. The State will take representative samples of outdoor surfaces impacted by soot and ash for analysis. The State will also analyze particulates collected during air monitoring. Once those results are available, the State and County will schedule a community availability session to present the results and answer resident questions.

"The fire is out, but community residents living around the Bethlehem Steel Plant are struggling with its aftermath in their own homes," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "DEC commends Great Lakes Industrial Development for agreeing to provide peace of mind for its Lackawanna neighbors. In addition, DEC and DOH, in partnership with the County, will continue to work with the community to provide further information on the nature and extent of the smoke plume."

"The commitment we have reached with Great Lakes Industrial Development will greatly assist the residents who have been impacted by the fire and allow them to immediately respond to home cleanup claims and community concerns," said Commissioner of Health Dr. Howard Zucker. "We join our partners at DEC in commending Great Lakes Industrial Development for recognizing the importance of helping community residents to review and respond to their property cleanup claims. In addition, we stand committed working with the community to provide them with as much information as possible."

"We have felt the gut punch of this devastating accidental fire - we have lost half our facility, most of our tenants, and well over 120 jobs have been disrupted – losses we will not likely recover. Having said that, we also know that its impact did not stop at our property boundaries," said Chris Wietig, Great Lakes Industrial Development. "As we continue our uphill climb regarding work, jobs, debris cleanup, and rebuilding at the site and while we have been advised we have no legal responsibility to do so, we look forward to working with the state to help our community and our Lackawanna neighbors in responding to these claims."

Residents whose homes were impacted by smoke damage from the fire at the former Bethlehem Steel Plant can now contact the company to report their property cleanup claims by calling (716) 207-8685.

In the coming days, Great Lakes Industrial Development will send additional information to residents, which will also be available on the company's website [www.steelworksindustrialpark.com](http://www.steelworksindustrialpark.com). If residents' homeowners insurance policies require that they file claims within a certain period of time, residents should proceed with that process to ensure their rights are protected.

"In the days following the Bethlehem Steel fire, I walked door-to-door in the Bethlehem Park neighborhood to speak one-on-one with residents," said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. "Some showed me furnace filters that were black with soot, while others expressed deep concern for the safety of their children and family members. The Governor, Department of Environmental Conservation and Department of Health have not only been responsive and open about their findings, but have been proactive about fighting for residents in Lackawanna and addressing their concerns. I thank them for their advocacy, and will work in partnership with them to deliver this news to the neighborhoods affected."

**Assemblyman Sean Ryan** said "The fire at the former Bethlehem Steel complex was devastating, and had a profound impact on the surrounding homes in the City of Lackawanna. The fire unleashed a dangerous cloud of smoke which spread ash throughout Lackawanna neighborhoods. We know that the immediate danger of the fire is over, but we don't know what the lingering effects of the fire will be. That is why it is so essential for additional ground testing to be conducted, to ensure we know the full scope of the impact of the fire. I thank Governor Cuomo and his administration for working diligently to address the concerns we heard from Lackawanna residents who have been impacted by the fire."

"I want to commend Governor Cuomo, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and NYS Department of Health for getting feedback from the residents who were impacted by the Lackawanna fire and putting a plan in place to address their concerns. It is important to take their concerns seriously and we should do testing that is needed to determine the effects of the fire," **Assembly Member Michael Kearns** said.

"Residents still struggling with the smoky after-effects of the recent Lackawanna fire should be encouraged by this news, which will help them get their properties cleaned up and get their lives back to normal. While thankfully there was no loss of life from the huge fire, there was considerable smoke damage in surrounding neighborhoods and interruption with peoples' lives. It was very important that those affected were returned to normal as soon as possible. As a Lackawanna native and as someone who has family members and friends who live in the tight-knit community that Bethlehem Park is, I would like to thank the NYS DEC and DOH, as well as Great Lakes Industrial Development, for working out this solution," said **County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz**.

"This major fire has greatly impacted our community and we're still feeling the effects weeks after," **said Lackawanna Mayor Geoffrey M. Szymanski.** "I commend the DEC and DOH for continuing to work with our community to address the concerns that exist and securing this commitment from Great Lakes Industrial Development. This company continues to be a good neighbor and I applaud their commitment to help our residents clean up and return their lives to normal."

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